

NOT VOTING—16

Braun	Inhofe	Shaheen
Brown	Marshall	Tillis
Cassidy	Moran	Van Hollen
Cramer	Portman	Young
Ernst	Rosen	
Hassan	Rounds	

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LUJÁN). On this vote, the yeas are 48, the nays are 36.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Stephanie Dawkins Davis, of Michigan, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

DEATH OF SHIREEN ABU AKLEH

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I join Secretary Blinken in calling for a thorough, impartial investigation of the tragic death of widely respected Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, in the Jenin refugee camp on May 4. According to press reports, Israel has already launched an investigation. Some Members of Congress have called for the FBI to be involved. I echo that recommendation. The investigation will also require the participation of Palestinian authorities. Too often, shootings of unarmed civilians in the occupied territories have gone unpunished. This must not be one of those cases.

In addition, Israeli authorities must hold accountable those who were responsible for, and participated in, the chaos that erupted during Ms. Abu Akleh's funeral procession, when Israeli police beat mourners with batons, including the pallbearers, causing them to momentarily drop one end of the casket. The explanation provided by Israeli police officials, that mourners had been chanting nationalist slogans and waving Palestinian flags, in no way justifies their lack of judgment, disrespect, and use of unnecessary force in what should have been a solemn, peaceful procession deserving of their protection.

ALAA ABDEL FATTAH

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, last month, dozens of Egyptian political

prisoners, including journalists, opposition activists, and lawmakers, were released from pretrial detention—the second group since July last year. These individuals had been behind bars on charges of spreading fake news and collaborating with a terrorist organization, accusations that are frequently used to silence critics of the al Sisi government.

These releases were welcome news, but thousands of other opposition figures remain behind bars for acts of free speech and association that are not crimes under international law. One of those is Alaa Abdel Fattah, a blogger, software developer, and political activist who is also a British citizen, who has already spent years in prison. He is now reportedly in his 6th week of a hunger strike to protest the inhumane conditions he and other prisoners are forced to endure.

Mr. Abdel Fattah was arrested in September 2019, along with his lawyer, Mohamed El Bager, while on a 5-year probation period after his conviction for the non-crime of spreading “fake news,” requiring him to spend 12 hours of each day at a police station. He had been released only 6 months earlier after spending 4 years behind bars.

He received a 5-year sentence last December after spending more than 2 years in pre-trial detention. He has reportedly been denied access to reading and writing material and has not been exposed to sunlight in months. Visitation with a single family member is limited to a mere 20 minutes per month.

The Egyptian Government has pointed to the lifting of the longstanding emergency law in October and the release of a new human rights strategy as evidence of progress. Compared to nothing, that is arguably true. But as long as people like Mr. Abdel Fattah are denied due process and treated in ways reminiscent of the Middle Ages, it is hard to take seriously Egypt's new “human rights strategy.”

Egypt is an important ally of the United States. We share a common interest in a peaceful Middle East. But on human rights we have profound differences. I urge the Egyptian authorities to match their words with actions. A serious human rights strategy would include repealing laws that are used to criminalize speech and association, real consequences for ignoring maximum limits on pre-trial detention, and protections of the rights of prisoners. A good first step would be the immediate release of Mr. Abdel Fattah, who never should have been arrested in the first place.

(At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

VOTE EXPLANATION

• Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, as my colleagues know, last weekend, I experienced a minor stroke in the form of a small venous tear at the back of

my head and, out of an abundance of caution, have been following my doctor's advice to remain under observation and rest for a few days. I am grateful for the warm wishes I have received from my colleagues and constituents from across Maryland and the excellent care of the medical team at George Washington University Hospital. Following my doctor's orders, I'll begin to ease back into my schedule.

Had I been present to vote today, I would have voted in favor of the critical package of aid for Ukraine. The people of Ukraine continue to stand up to Vladimir Putin's unprovoked attack, and today's aid package will deliver military and humanitarian aid to strengthen their forces and care for refugees. There was no reason to delay this crucial support, and I am glad it has finally passed.

I would have also voted in support of today's bill to deliver much-needed relief to restaurants and small businesses in Maryland and across the country who are still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. I hear regularly from these businesses, who have worked hard to stay afloat and continue to struggle through no fault of their own. America's restaurants are at the center of their communities, and we must support them through this unprecedented time. I am disappointed that many of my Republican colleagues voted against proceeding today, and we once again saw the damage of the filibuster to progress for the American people. I will continue to work to persuade my colleagues of the urgency of this support.

I look forward to returning soon to work alongside you all for the people of my great State of Maryland.●

SMALL BUSINESS COVID RELIEF ACT

Mr. OSSOFF. Mr. President, restaurants in Georgia have been among the small businesses worst hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, and I am working every day to help them recover and thrive. Today, I voted that the Senate should proceed to debate S. 4008, the Small Business COVID Relief Act, legislation intended to help businesses impacted by COVID-19, including small, independent restaurants that were unable previously to access emergency relief via the Restaurant Revitalization Fund.

However, should the Senate proceed to debate this measure, as I voted today that we should, the bill should be amended such that it is well targeted and more fiscally responsible in order to earn my support in a vote on final passage. While I support this legislation's aims—helping small businesses, especially small and independent restaurants—and while I believe we should proceed to debate it, I would oppose it in its present form should such modifications not be adopted.

I appreciate the support of the bill's lead sponsor, Senator CARDIN, who has